



Parent Backpack for Returning to School



TIPS FOR PARENTS:

Start Preparing Early:



- Two weeks before school begins, start to change and establish new routines, such as bedtime.
- [Sleep Hygiene for Children](#)

Try to get the family back to old routines:



- Establish the importance of routines.
- Mealtimes generally at the same time/place every evening.
- Reduce screen time, especially at night.
- Refreshers on reading, math, and other skills they had but may have forgotten.
- [Helping Kids Back into the School Routine](#)

Start preparing your child for the new school year:



- Show them that you are looking forward to a new school year.
- Begin modeling and practicing self-regulation skills.
- If possible, involve them in school supply shopping.
- Discuss positive things about returning to the school building.
- Encourage them to share their thoughts about returning to school.
- Speak about ways to stay safe throughout the school day.
- Brainstorm about how to handle anxiety about being back in school:
[How to get your Child to Talk About School](#)

After the first day back:



- Ask open ended questions about their day.

Have a Plan B (or C) for kids who may have difficulty within the school day:



- Establish a school staff person (teacher, principal, guidance counselor) that they feel comfortable with or can go to if they are feeling upset in school.
- Remind them of ways to calm themselves if they feel upset or nervous: [50 Calm-Down Ideas to Try with Kids of All Ages](#).
- Enlist friends to create support and look out for each other during the school day and remind them that their friends are there too (if applicable).
- Think about planning something fun for the weekends (a family board game night, getting ice cream, watching a favorite movie, fun outside activity, visit to a family or friends house, long walk with a family member).
- Explore other options of support, such as an ADAPP Counselor, private therapist, support group, etc.

Model Self-Regulation in your Family

SELF-REGULATION



- is the act of managing thoughts, coping with big emotions, adapting and responding to one's environment appropriately.
- is taught through interaction with child and caretaker, as the caretaker promotes and models healthy behaviors and coping skills. This is called co-regulation.
- helps you and your child cope with challenging feelings, stressors and decisions to be made together.
- promotes wellbeing across the lifespan and is important, as it allows children to do well in school, with peers and at home.

Mental Health Matters

Parents play an important role in promoting mental health and wellness in their children. The US Surgeon General's Advisory on Youth Mental Health indicates the following for parents and caregivers:

Be the best role model you can be for young people by taking care of your own mental and physical health. Young people often learn behaviors and habits from what they see around them. You can model good habits by talking to children about the importance of mental health, seeking help when you need it, and showing positive ways you deal with stress so children learn from you.

THE THREE C's

The beginning of the school year can be a difficult time for students. NAMI created **The Three C's** to help you and your child feel supported as you talk about mental health and wellness, identify concrete support, and connect empathetically at home.

- Get **Curious**
- Get **Concrete**
- Stay **Compassionate**



10 QUESTIONS ON A TUESDAY

10 Questions on a Tuesday created by NAMI is a Weekly Check-In for Parents/Caregivers with their child/children! Ask any of the questions to develop practical strategies with your child on how to best support their mental health. nami.org

STRESS HAPPENS! It is important for parents and caregivers to take care of themselves. By engaging in practices that promote wellbeing, parents and caregivers can be more in-tune to the needs of their children and can model ways to cope. [Well-Being Practices](#) - Gentle Reminders for Times of Stress.

Resources:

- Care for Yourself One Small Way Each Day flyer: [PARENT FLYER](#) or [STUDENT FLYER](#)
- CDC: Making Decisions about Children Attending In-Person School During the COVID Pandemic: [Information for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers](#)
- [NY Project Hope: Dealing with COVID](#)
- [Children's Health](#)
- [Supporting Mental Health at Home, NYS School Mental Health and Training Resource Center](#)
- [CDC Parent Resource Kit: Ensuring Children and Young People's Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Well-being](#)
- [Just Breathe](#) - Mindfulness Website with brief mindfulness videos for adults and youth.
- [ADAPP](#) - Mental Health and Wellness

